Amendments to the Claims:

This claim listing will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claim Listing:

1. (currently amended) A composition for inhibiting specific gene expression with reduced side effects, the composition comprising a ~~modified CpG-containing~~ phosphorothioate oligonucleotide containing a modified CpG dinucleotide wherein the oligonucleotide ~~that~~ is complementary to a portion of a genomic region or gene for which inhibition of expression is desired, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, and wherein the modified CpG is ~~racemic and is selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG,~~ 2'-O-substituted CpG~~, phosphotriester CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, and 2'-5' CpG~~.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) A method for providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide with reduced side effects of splenomegaly and depletion of platelets when administered to a mammal, comprising administering to the mammal a composition comprising a modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide that is complementary to a portion of a genomic region or gene for which inhibition of expression is desired, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein the modified CpG is selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG, phosphotriester CpG, stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, inverted CpG and 2'-5' CpG ~~according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a gene that is being expressed in the mammal~~.

4. (currently amended) A method for providing c CpG- containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide, with reduced side effects, to an individual with a disease caused by aberrant gene expression, the method comprising administering to an individual having the disease a composition comprising a modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide that is complementary to a portion of a genomic region or gene that is aberrantly expressed, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein the modified CpG is selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG,

phosphotriester CpG, stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, inverted CpG and 2'-5' CpG ~~according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a gene that is aberrantly expressed, wherein such aberrant expression causes the disease.~~

5. (currently amended) A method for reducing side effects of a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide administered to a mammal, comprising:

(a) providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide having a ~~racemic~~ CpG modification selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, inverted CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG, stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG, phosphotriester CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, and 2'-5' CpG; and

(b) administering the modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide to the mammal,

wherein administration of the modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide results in fewer side effects that the administration of an unmodified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide.

6. – 15. (canceled)